

Tom Horne
Superintendent

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ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

For more information contact Amy Rezzonico, Press Secretary at (602) 542-5072

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HORNE CALLS ON CONGRESS TO PASS LEGISLATION TO REIMBURSE ARIZONA FOR COST OF EDUCATING ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Cost estimated at \$750 million

PHOENIX (Wednesday, December 14, 2005) -- As Congress prepares to debate immigration reform, State Schools Chief Tom Horne is formally asking that Arizona's congressional delegation request \$750 million in federal dollars to cover Arizona's cost of educating children who are in the United States illegally.

"Protecting the country's borders is the clear responsibility of the federal government, and Congress is about to debate a number of reform measures. No matter which of these proposals is ultimately successful, I would urge the Arizona delegation to push for an allocation of federal dollars to defray the costs to state taxpayers who are currently bearing the burden of paying for the education of children who are not here legally," Horne said.

"Recent research by the Pew Research Center indicates there are approximately 125,000 such children in Arizona. Arizona's taxpayers spend about \$6,000 per student, not including construction costs for schools. The annual cost of school operations for children of undocumented workers therefore appears to be \$750 million per year," Horne noted.

The U.S. House of Representatives is scheduled to vote on an immigration reform bill this week. The U.S. Senate is expected to consider legislation sometime after Congress returns to session in early 2006.

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